

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6351
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AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, NU
SUBJECT: SOMOZA MAKES CONCESSIONS TO PROTESTERS

REF: MANAGUA 1736

1. THE OFFICE OF ARCHBISHOP OBANDO Y BRAVO ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ON APRIL 17 STATING THAT OBANDO HAD MET WITH PRES. SOMOZA TO DISCUSS REQUESTS OF PROTESTING STUDENT LEADERS. THE COMMUNIQUE STATED THAT SOMOZA HAD ACCEPTED TO TRY TO PLACE OTHER PRISONERS WITH FSLN PRISONERS BORGE AND JAEN TO END THEIR ISOLATION; THAT NO REPRISALS WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST PROTESTING STUDENTS AND THAT SCHOOLS WOULD BE REOPENED; AND THAT STUDENT COMPLAINTS ABOUT MISTREATMENT BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS AT THE MASAYA INSTITUTE WOULD BE INVESTIGATED.

2. STUDENT LEADERS QUICKLY RESPONDED SAYING THEY WANTED ACTION NOT PROMISES. THEY ALSO SAID THAT OBANDO HADN'T PRESENTED THEIR MINIMUM DEMANDS. THEY REFERRED TO THEIR DEMAND THAT WOMEN FSLN PRISONERS BE MOVED FROM THE CENTRAL JAIL TO THE MODEL JAIL WHERE OTHER FSLN PRISONERS ARE HELD. A SPOKESMAN FOR OBANDO REPLIED THAT OBAND WAS
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NOT A MIDDLEMAN NEGOTIATING ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENTS WITH SOMOZA.

3. DURING APRIL 18 THE COMMUNIST LED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION (SCAAS) ANNOUNED A 48-HOUR SYMPATHY STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS AND THE STUDENTS. CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY (UCA) STUDENTS ALSO JOINED THE STRIKE MOVEMENT BY SEIZING CAMPUS BUILDINGS AND CLOSING THE UNIVERSITY. TO DATE, THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (UNAN) REMAINS OPEN.

IN THE AFTERNOON THE OPPOSITION POLITICAL PARTIES MET AND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE SIGNED BY ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES, EXCEPT THE AGUERO CONSERVATIVES, EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PROTESTERS AND REITERATING THEIR UNITED POSITION THAT NEITHER COLLECTIVELY NOR INDIVIDUALLY WOULD THEY DIALOG WITH SOMOZA OR THE LIBERAL PARTY AS LONG AS SOMOZA IS LIBERAL PARTY PRESIDENT.

4. ALSO, ON THE 18TH, THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS OFFICE ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE STATING THE PRES. SOMOZA HAD ACCEPTED THE REQUEST OF THE ARCHBISHOP TO END THE ISOLATION OF BORGE AND JAEN AND AS A RESULT HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THAT OTHER PRISONERS BE MOVED INTO THE SECTION WHERE THESE TWO WERE DETAINED. A RADIO BROADCAST THE NEXT MORNING INDICATED THAT FIVE COMMON CRIMINALS HAD BEEN MOVED INTO CELLS WITH BORGE AND JAEN. THE BROADCAST FURTHER REPORTED THAT THE HUNGER STRIKERS LED BY JAEN'S MOTHER HAD RESPONDED THAT THEIR OBJECTIVE OF GETTING BORGE AND JAEN REUNITED WITH THEIR FSLN COLLEAGUES HAD NOT BEEN ACHIEVED BY THE GON RESPONSE AND THEREFORE THEY WOULD CONTINUE THEIR PROTEST.
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